

Federal Government makes a welcome start in establishing the NDIS, but a long journey ahead

NDS Media Release

10 August 2011

The Federal Government will take the first steps to establish a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as recommended by the Productivity Commission and advocated by the disability sector.

An NDIS would transform the provision of support services to Australians with significant disability. NDS congratulates the Government on its endorsement of the vision articulated in the Productivity Commission's final report on Disability Care and Support and looks forward to strong progress in implementing the reforms.

Today, Prime Minister Gillard, Ministers Macklin and Shorten and Parliamentary Secretary McLucas released the Productivity Commission's final 1,000-page report on [Disability Care and Support](#). While supporting the Productivity Commission's vision, the Government has yet to endorse its recommendations or commit the additional funding required to implement the NDIS beyond an allocation of \$10 million to support a newly-established technical advisory group. It will respond to the detailed recommendations in the report at a later date.

In the plan set out in the report the NDIS would be implemented in stages and not fully implemented until 2018-19. Regional launch sites would operate in 2014 to enable the new system to be tested and fine-tuned. In the 2012 Federal Budget NDS would like to see forward estimates reflect a funding commitment to support these launch sites. The NDIS must be built on the security of a guaranteed and sustainable funding commitment.

NDS strongly supports the Productivity Commission's conclusion that while full implementation of the NDIS would require an additional \$6.5 billion a year, the social and economic returns will outweigh its cost.

In its 18 month inquiry into the disability services system, during which it received over 1,000 submissions, the Productivity Commission found the current system to be fragmented, underfunded, inequitable and providing little choice to people with disability and their carers. The Government accepts that patching up the existing system would be insufficient to fix these problems.

The involvement of State and Territory governments is critical to the successful implementation of an NDIS. The Prime Minister will seek agreement at COAG later this month to establish a Council on Disability Reform consisting of Treasurers and Disability Ministers.

The support of the Federal Coalition is also critical and NDS hopes that the Coalition continues to offer support for the establishment of an NDIS.

For the not-for-profit disability services sector the prospect of reform that Minister Jenny Macklin today described as "transformational change" is both exciting and daunting. An NDIS will require a much larger workforce appropriately skilled; and gearing up not-for-profit organisations to work effectively in a competitive, individualised funding environment. Meeting these challenges will require investment in building the capacity of the sector if the value of not-for-profit organisations in creating social capital is to be retained and strengthened. This is a matter to which the technical advisory group should give considerable attention.

The Government has said that, consistent with the Productivity Commission's recommendation of a parallel National Injury Insurance Scheme, it will discuss with the States and Territories how to extend catastrophic injury insurance to all people not currently covered, regardless of the cause of their injury.

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“Are You joking Julia?”

Is a 7 year delay a political stunt?

Most importantly No

“Disability Speaks”

MEDIA RELEASE: August 10th , 2011

Can the announcement today about National Disability insurance by the Prime Minister Julia Gillard be a tragic example of political grandstanding at its very very worst using people with a disability as a political football?

With 410,000 Australians with disabilities confirmed as desperately needing support this announcement consigns some of Australia's most disadvantaged to long term ongoing misery while the Federal Government works towards a NDIS program that is not guaranteed to ever happen. Do you remember Bob Hawke in 1990 with “No child will be living in poverty”

Who knows what the political or financial climate will be in 12months time far less in 7 years time

Why can Australia start the roll out of a \$42 billion dollar national broad band project within 12 months?

Why can Australia implement an \$8.0 billion dollar Carbon Tax program within 18 months of announcement?

Why will a NDIS disability support program take 7 years?

Most importantly no additional crisis funding is allocated for additional crisis support in the interim period. The current despair will roll on.

Whilst the rhetoric towards a disability support program is positive anyone who believes that the Gillard Government is actually taking action to resolve a crisis described previously by Assistant treasurer Bill Shorten as a national disgrace may be being misled by a dishonest government.

If Julia Gillard is serious about NDIS she must immediately do three things to prove her intent

1. Pump an additional \$2.5 billion dollars per annum into the current National disability Scheme to provide services to the clients currently on high priority waiting lists around the country
2. Demand that the NDIS program is implemented within 3 years and provide additional resources to achieve this.
3. Explain how she intends to fund NDIS

Any less than this from the Prime Minister may expose her as a shallow leader without the passion and family commitment that is necessary to resolve the national disability crisis and who may well be using grubby political tactics to deflect attention from her failure to address a crisis that needs resolution now. Talking about delivering a program in 7 years time, to fix a clearly identified crisis today is so ludicrous as to be bordering on farcical

Could it be the government does not want to pump any more money into disability and a protracted delay is the best way of avoiding doing so. Given the failure of the 2006 COAG plan to remove young people with disability from aged care facilities any one who believes rhetoric without funding commitments and shorter deadlines has been disappointed before.